

The project for members in the voluntary and private sectors

What's been happening?

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the *Working together in UNISON project*. The project has been on the go for around 6 months now, so we thought it would be good to let you all know what has been happening.

We also attended a conference on the personalisation of services which they feel will be a major issue for service providers and members over the next few years (see personalisation article). A short feedback report is available on request.

Meetings & questionnaire have identified working conditions & pressure of work as your main concerns.

As part of the work plan, meetings to

promote the project were arranged for members and held in December in Aberdeen, Dundee and Banff (which was also attended by retired members keen to get further support for a charter of rights for community care workers).

A questionnaire was also sent to members and the results of this and feedback from meetings has been written up and fed back

to members attending our meetings. The main points to come out of the survey were the concerns members had about working condition and pressures at work around staffing level and pay. The general view was that the union needed to be more responsive to these issues.

Introductory meetings were also held with senior managers in some of the larger employers in the sector.

Stewards training and development day

This day resulted in the forming of an action plan to be used as part of the progress report.

A successful training and development day was also held for Cornerstone Stewards early 2012. The outcome of that meeting was a development plan; a pay claim for 2012 and comments on the employer's grievance and disciplinary procedures following which an action plan has been produced and will be used as part of the progress report.

"A growing part of the work has been meeting with, advising and representing members particularly in relation to disciplinary matters" said Mairi.

Your Help Is Needed

This project is a short term one and once we go, there is no-one to replace us.

UNISON needs more stewards in all the organizations where we have members. It really isn't an onerous task and with the training and support given by UNISON it can be an interesting, challenging and "different" experience. The skills gained are also useful for your work. UNISON provides all the training required and most employers will allow paid time off to attend. The training experiences offered by UNISON can be useful both inside and out with work.

If you are interested please contact us: UNISON, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen AB10 1ZQ Tel: 01224 620624 Keith: 0797 2262 821 Mairi: 0797 2262 785 keithunison@gmail.com mairiunison@gmail.com

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Personalisation (Self Directed Support)

There is growing concern amongst service users, carers and workers, however, that behind the rhetoric of increased choice and control, self-directed support is increasingly being used by local authorities in some parts of the country as a cover for cuts in services.

In February 2012 the Scottish Government, introduced the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Bill, which aims at changing the future of social care. It will be one of the most significant reforms in recent years. There is evidence showing it to be a popular policy with some groups of service users (those with disabilities and mental health problems) – and it's not hard to see why. In the past, services for these service users were often based on a 'warehousing' model, with everyone treated exactly the same. It is therefore not surprising that many individuals enjoy the independence, freedom and choice that come from having a direct payment or individual budget.

Glasgow City Council – one of the first local authorities to implement personalisation has recently stopped the process and is “going back to the drawing board” after pressure from UNISON and organisations representing service users. Aberdeen City Council is “putting its toe in the water” and those involved in care provision are watching carefully.

UNISON Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire branches are taking a joint approach, setting up a joint group between the branches to plan for impact of personalisation. We hope to learn from the experience of Glasgow and other branches.

If we were to hold a conference on personalisation (self-directed support) would you be interested in attending? Would you be interested in helping to set it up – learn new skills and gain some new experiences (let Keith or Mairi know).

Pathways Into UNISON

This is a course designed specifically for women in UNISON who are interested in knowing more about the union. A key purpose is to provide an opportunity to find out more about UNISON, gain confidence in your skills and abilities and how these can be put to good use in the union and in your day to day life. We intend running a course on **August 17/18**. If you are interested in taking part or for more details please contact Keith or Mairi on 01224 620624.



Network

We currently have the contact details for a number of members who are interested in acting as a self-support group. Again for the group to be effective we need more people to be involved. It is anticipated that this group could act as a

support mechanism and networking organization, helping to share best practice, and also potentially resolve issues using techniques/methods used successfully by other members. The group could use social networking if it was felt appropriate – but again we need your

help, we need more people to be involved! It is your union – this is your opportunity to meet new people (out with work – in a social environment), learn about other organizations and use the knowledge and experience you have to help others.